



**CONTACT:**

Mr. Tai Freligh, Communications Manager

[tai.freligh@dred.state.nh.us](mailto:tai.freligh@dred.state.nh.us)

NH Division of Travel and Tourism Development

**Phone:** (603) 271-2343, Option #2 / **Cell:** (603) 545-4840

[www.facebook.com/VisitNH](http://www.facebook.com/VisitNH) **URL:** [www.visitnh.gov](http://www.visitnh.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 19, 2010**

**AS DESTINATION WEDDINGS GAIN IN POPULARITY ACROSS THE  
GLOBE, NEW HAMPSHIRE OFFERS WORLD-CLASS LOCATIONS  
TO TIE THE KNOT**

**Increasing Numbers of Brides & Grooms of All Ages Are Choosing to Host Out of  
Town Celebrations for Their Special Day – and Save Up to \$20,000**

**Concord, New Hampshire, January 19, 2010** – If there is one single trend that has been re-shaping wedded bliss, it is the growing popularity of “Destination Weddings.” Even more appealing is that destination weddings don’t have to cost more than traditional weddings.

According to DestinationWeddings.com wedding planning site, which arranges more than 1,000 destination weddings per year, one out of every six couples getting married for the first time chooses a destination 200 miles or more from their home. That number rises to 61% for couples getting remarried. The site also states that destination weddings have, in recent years, become more accessible to couples looking to add spice to their special ceremony; and in fact, one of the most common reasons to choose a Destination Wedding is to save money. Properly planned, a Destination Wedding can save a couple upwards of \$20,000 off the cost of a traditional wedding, because it often involves fewer guests.

In northern New Hampshire, The Balsams Grand Hotel and Resort is host to numerous weddings annually and has witnessed the trend in destination weddings first hand.

“We have experienced a significant increase in couples seeking destination weddings in recent years,” said The Balsams wedding specialist, Karen Ahrens. “We’ve had people from as far as California in this country; and we recently hosted a bride and groom, their wedding party and all their guests from the United Kingdom.” Ahrens added that couples are looking for activities as well as amenities; the food and rooms are important, but they also want golf, tennis, swimming, skiing, and more depending on the season.

Ahrens continued, “Some of our destination weddings have indeed been smaller than other types of ceremonies, usually involving close family and friends. Destination weddings can vary in size from intimate weddings with only close family and friends to larger weddings with guests flying across country to attend.” The Balsams is among the properties that offer special package deals for wedding parties – an approach that also helps manage costs. ([www.weddings.visitnh.gov](http://www.weddings.visitnh.gov))

The same holds true for Mountain View Grand Resort & Spa, located in Whitefield, NH.

“Mountain View Grand has also noticed an increased interest in winter weddings, and this month will begin offering winter wedding packages that include discounted rental fees, complimentary activities and other value added benefits,” said Rick McCarten, director of sales & marketing.

According to The Knot Magazine, Destination Weddings – which are at least 200 miles from where the bride and groom live – definitely are on the rise. McCarten has also noticed a big surge. “We’re experiencing our busiest year ever for weddings, with many couples coming from areas outside of New England seeking more unique experiences for their friends and family,” he said. “We’ve even started offering scenic helicopter rides.”

Glen Gardner, director of sales and marketing for M/S Mt. Washington Cruises, added “We have seen a doubling of weddings on the M/S Mount Washington in 2009 and 2010, more than half of which are from out of state. The natural beauty of the lakes and mountains of New Hampshire have drawn couples from as far as Edinburgh and Bangkok to the unique setting of Lake Winnepesaukee.”

According to Alice DeSouza, Director of The NH Division of Travel & Tourism Development (NH DTTD), a destination wedding does not mean that couples have to go to far off places like Tahiti, Aruba or Europe to find a magical experience.

“New Hampshire’s varied natural and historic treasures can be discovered and enjoyed and become part of a romantic remembrance,” said DeSouza. “Wedding photographs can be taken near the ocean at one of our historic lighthouses; in the rustic setting of a covered bridge; or a fall panorama of yellows, oranges, and reds painting the mountains. The charm and authenticity of the New Hampshire experience will resonate with couples and their guests for years to come.”

Chandra Carson, a young newlywed from the Washington, D.C. area discovered The Inns and Spas at Mill Falls, located in the heart of New Hampshire’s historic Lakes Region, while dating her then-boyfriend Kyle, who is originally from Henniker, New Hampshire. “I just fell in love with Church Landing,” says Carson. “The destination had everything we wanted – from a charming village setting to beautiful surrounding scenery to fabulous, affordable accommodations for our wedding party and guests. And the hospitality was just superb.”

Deb Pepka, director of sales for The Inn and Spas at Mill Falls in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire noted, “We’ve seen an increase in their winter weddings as more brides and grooms look to take advantage of cost savings during off-peak times.”

DeSouza added that grand ballrooms, historic churches and country clubs are classic sites, however there are so many other unique and stunning settings including country

inns with on-site spas, a Victorian steamship to take couples to the mysterious Star Island of the Isles of Shoals and outdoor chapels such as the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge.

“Combining weddings and honeymoons also are becoming increasingly popular in New Hampshire,” said DeSouza. “Instead of hurrying off to catch a plane after the wedding, newlyweds are opting to relax, linger and explore the varied regions of the state.”

For complete information on New Hampshire wedding and honeymoon destinations, including resources for planning and booking your event, visit [www.weddings.visitnh.gov](http://www.weddings.visitnh.gov).

#### ABOUT THE DIVISION OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The Division of Travel and Tourism Development, as part of the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development, works with the state’s seven travel regions to increase visitation, travel and visitor expenditures in order to expand business activity and employment throughout the state. The division is responsible for domestic and international advertising and public relations, literature publication and distribution, [www.visitnh.gov](http://www.visitnh.gov) administration, grant administration and research to monitor and measure the impact of travel and tourism to the state. For more information about New Hampshire tourism, call 603-271-2665 or visit [www.visitnh.gov](http://www.visitnh.gov).